

REMARKS

Claims 1-5 and 7-26 are currently pending. Of these claims, the Office Action states that Claims 1-5, 7-9, 16-18, 19 and 20 are allowed. Claims 11, 13-15 and 26 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but stated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 10, 12 and 21-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Maguire (US 6,057,514). Reconsideration of the allowability of the pending claims is respectfully requested in view of the following comments.

1. The Objection to Claim 11.

Claim 11 has been rewritten in independent form including all of the features of its base claim, Claim 10, and any intervening claims. Applicant submits that this claim is now in condition for allowance.

2. The Rejection of Claims 10, 12 and 21-25, and the Objection to Claims 13-15 and 26.

Claims 10 and 24 have been amended to clarify that the sealing device recited therein serves also to regulate material flow from the hopper when the hopper is positioned to dispense material as suggested by the Examiner.

Claims 12 and 13-15 are dependent, directly or indirectly, upon Claim 10 and are believed to be allowable for the same reasons as Claim 10.

Claims 25 and 26 are dependent upon Claim 24 and are believed allowable for the same reasons as Claim 24.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejection of Claims 21-23 as being anticipated under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) by Maguire (U.S. 6,057,514).

Claim 21 includes the recitation of a removable assembly comprising a tongue and locking groove assembly between the hopper and the blender. Claim 21 is believed allowable for the same reasons as Claim 7. Claim 22 includes the recitation of a releasable securing assembly comprising a release pin and a retaining bracket and the method of disengaging the hopper by removing a release bin from the hopper and a retaining bracket on the equipment, respectively. Claim 22 is believed allowable for the same reason as Claim 8.

Claim 23 includes the steps of (a) regulating the material flow from the hopper to the equipment with a metering device and (b) sealing off the neck of the hopper with the metering

device. The metering device of Claim 23, like the sealing device of Claim 1, serves to both seal off the hopper and regulate material flow from the hopper. Claim 23 has been amended to provide that the step of disengaging the hopper can be accomplished by way of either a release pin and retaining bracket assembly or a tongue and locking groove assembly, similar to Claims 7 and 8.

3. Fees

A check in the amount of \$43.00 is included to cover the claims fees for the addition of one (1) independent claim. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any additional fees and credit any overpayment of fees to Deposit Account No. 20-0778.

CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing amendment and remarks, Applicants submit that all pending claims are now in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at 770-933-9500 should the Examiner have any questions concerning the amendments and remarks presented herewith.

Respectfully submitted,

**THOMAS, KAYDEN,
HORSTEMEYER & RISLEY, L.L.P.**



Todd Deveau
Reg. No. 29,526

100 Galleria Parkway, NW
Suite 1750
Atlanta, Georgia 30339
770-933-9500